

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5853

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 6364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY DEFENSE

DELEGATE SISOUK

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER'S DELEGATE FOR DEFENSE AND SIMULTANEOUSLY MINISTER OF FINANCE SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK WILL BE IN NEW YORK AROUND OCTOBER 1 HEADING RLG DELEGATION TO UNITED NATIONS. SISOUK HAS EXPRESSED DESIRE TO VISIT WASHINGTON FIRST PART OF OCTOBER TO DISCUSS BILATERAL US-RLG RELATIONS, PRIMARILY PROBLEMS RELATED TO FINANCING OF FAR AND IMPACT OF PROTOCOL ON USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO LAOS. SISOUK IS SLATED TO BECOME MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN THE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENTS WITH KEY STATE, DEFENSE AND CIA OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY

1. SISOUK NA CHAMAPSSAK, PRESENTLY PRIME MINISTER'S DELEGATE FOR DEFENSE AND CONCURRENTLY MINISTER OF FINANCE, HAS TOLD US THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO FLY TO WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR STATE, DEFENSE, AND CIA OFFICIALS SHORTLY AFTER DELIVERING SPEECH BEFORE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA). SISOUK IS LEAVING VIENTIANE EITHER SEPTEMBER 18 OR 19 FOR EUROPE BEFORE PROCEEDING TO NAIROBI, WHERE HE WILL

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LEAD RLG DELEGATION TO IMF GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE.

FROM NAIROBI, HE WILL FLY TO NEW YORK WHERE HE WILL ADDRESS UNGA. SISOUK EXPECTS TO ARRIVE IN NEW YORK AROUND OCTOBER 1 AND SPEND ABOUT TEN DAYS IN THE UNITED STATES BEFORE RETURNING TO VIENTIANE TO ENTER NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE. LATTER DESIGNATION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY ALL SOURCES, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER.

2. WE RECOMMEND AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO SISOUK'S SUGGESTION FOR TWO-THREE DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE VERY TIMELY TO REVIEW WITH HIM SOME OF THE PROBLEMS-- BOTH MILITARY AND FINANCIAL -- WHICH LIE AHEAD. IN ADDITION, WE EXPECT SISOUK TO PLAY LEADING ROLE IN THE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. AS AN ARTICULATE, YOUNG (46 YEARS), EXPERIENCED AND COURAGEOUS LEADER REPRESENTING THE VIENTIANE SIDE, ANTI-COMMUNISTS LOOK TO HIM AS ONE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS TO GIVE BALANCE TO THE COALITION GOVERNMENT AND TO LIMIT LPF INFLUENCE IN THE CABINET. AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, HE WILL BE IN CHARGE OF THE ONE DISCIPLINED AND WELL-ORGANIZED NON-COMMUNIST FORCE IN LAOS. IN THE PAST, RLGAFF HAS ALSO BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF THE LION'S SHARE OF UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO LAOS. HOW TO CHANNEL THIS AID TO RLGAFF IN THE FUTURE IS A PROBLEM WE NEED TO DISCUSS WITH SOMEONE LIKE SISOUK, IN VIEW OF THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON INTRODUCTION OF WAR MATERIEL IN LAO AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL.

3. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE WASHINGTON'S REACTION SOONEST SO THAT WE CAN INFORM SISOUK PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM VIENTIANE.
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